



Office of The Ulster County Comptroller

COUNTY SALARY COMPARISON

June 23, 2014

Payroll is one of the largest cost centers for most government units. The broad nature of the services provided to taxpayers in the operation of a County, which range from public safety and law enforcement, to street and infrastructure maintenance, to health and human services, mandate that salaried employees and officers should represent a large segment of the overall cost of government operation. Such is the case in Ulster County.

It is also important to recognize that the raw numbers associated with that expenditure should not be understood in isolation; the public sector salary marketplace is as dynamic, if not typically as lucrative, as that of the private sector. Although public service is its own reward, pay rates and fixed salaries at every level are a major factor in the recruitment, retention, and longevity of qualified employees in these critical areas of service delivery. And, maintaining a certain level of salary equity for elected officials is also in the public interest as it impacts the pool of qualified individuals willing to run for office and serve with unfettered and uncompromised attention to their duties. In this context, the efficacy of studying comparisons to private sector equivalencies in job skills and duties may be debated, but it is certainly prudent to be mindful of comparative payroll structures in regional counties. Such review and analysis should assist the Executive and the Legislature in balancing the fiscal constraints dictated by good financial stewardship with the need to ensure that the County can attract and retain qualified individuals to serve its constituents.

This report summarizes the salaries of specific positions of local County Government for nine New York State Counties in 2014. The collected information was gathered from a survey conducted by our Office to the specific Counties, for which have closely relatable geographical locations and/or government structures to ours. The counties surveyed were: Albany, Dutchess, Erie, Oneida, Onondaga, Orange, Rockland, Sullivan and Ulster County.

The data allows for meaningful general comparisons between regional organizations. Because every County's framework varies, these numbers do not take into account significant factors that may limit the ability to make direct comparisons between positions. Some of the factors that require consideration include:

- Size and population of the County; (**Table 1**)
- How closely do the duties and responsibilities of the other jurisdictions' positions align themselves with Ulster County positions?
- Are the positions part-time or full-time?
- How many employees does the position have direct managerial control and responsibility over?
- How do the jurisdictions' benefit packages compare?

- How do the economic conditions of the surveyed jurisdictions match up to Ulster County?
- How do quality of life factors affect the market prices for top officials?

Notwithstanding the factors which must be weighed in making comparisons, the data has been vetted sufficiently to allow for valuable insights and the prompting of further research and analysis should the administration or the legislature desire such follow up.

Table 1: Size, Population and Adopted Budget for the Counties Surveyed

	Area (Sq. Mi.)	Population	2014 Adopted Budget
Albany	533	305,455	\$ 628,000,000
Dutchess	825	297,322	439,000,000
Erie	1,227	919,086	1,611,000,000
Oneida	1,213	233,556	376,000,000
Onondaga	806	466,852	1,214,000,000
Orange	839	374,512	763,000,000
Rockland	199	317,757	753,000,000
Sullivan	997	76,793	226,000,000
Ulster	1,161	181,791	336,000,000

Table 2 (set forth on the final page of the Report) illustrates the responses from the respective Counties. It is important to recognize the following variables and assumptions with regard to the structure and/or titles held of each County:

- **Albany County** refers to their Commissioner of Finance as “Director of Management & Budget” this salary is included in the Commissioner of Finance category.
- **Erie County** refers to their Director of Personnel as “Commissioner of Personnel” and their Commissioner of Finance is known as the “Commissioner/Director of Real Property.” The salaries of the elected officials are set by the Charter and have not been approved for salary increases by an amendment. There are two deputy positions under the Comptroller; Deputy Comptroller of Accounting whose responsibilities are similar to a County Treasurer and the Deputy Comptroller for Internal Audit who is responsible for the oversight of County activity.
- **Oneida County** does not have a separate attorney for the legislature; their County Attorney is responsible for their legal matters. Their County Comptroller, by law, is also the Public Administrator for intestate/decedents. The County Comptroller receives statutory commissions on these estates, where applicable.
- **Rockland County** does not refer to their Deputy Executives as such, and therefore the salary for this title reflects the salary of their “Chief of Staff.” This County does not have a Comptroller, and it also does not title their Commissioner of Department of Public Works, Director of Personnel and Commissioner of Finance in accordance with the titles we used for our salary comparison. Instead, this County titles these positions “Superintendent of Highways,” “Commissioner of Personnel,” and “Director of Fiscal Operations.”

- **Sullivan County** does not have a County Executive, instead they have a County Manager; this salary is included in the County Executive category. This County also does not use the same titles as we have listed for our surveying purposes; they title their Commissioner of Social Services as the Director of Health & Family Services.

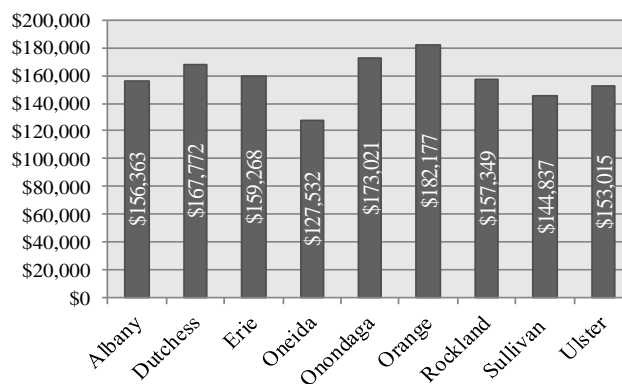
Table 2: Salaries of Surveyed County Positions

Title*	County									Average
	<u>Albany</u>	<u>Dutchess</u>	<u>Erie</u>	<u>Oneida</u>	<u>Onondaga</u>	<u>Orange</u>	<u>Rockland</u>	<u>Sullivan</u>	<u>Ulster</u>	
County Executive	\$ 118,317	\$ 139,870	\$ 103,428	\$ 111,609	\$ 122,413	\$ 182,177	\$ 155,087	\$ 144,837	\$ 133,572	\$ 134,590
County Executive Deputy	106,869	108,059	126,608	93,720	133,734	146,047	105,900	-	112,214	116,644
County Legislators	21,752	15,450	42,588	8,368	25,591	29,811	32,587	22,600	10,000	23,194
Legislative Chair	36,257	32,952	52,588	21,747	46,615	49,684	40,805	31,600	19,500	36,861
Legislative Majority Leader	28,148	23,688	47,588	10,038	-	36,436	-	-	12,000	26,316
Legislative Minority Leader	25,590	19,560	47,588	10,038	-	36,436	-	-	12,000	25,202
County Legislative Counsel	115,000	50,000	-	-	40,000	110,018	98,400	-	50,000	77,236
Legislative Clerk	42,038	84,747	86,690	-	84,176	-	104,400	59,774	73,351	76,454
County Attorney	110,726	132,500	136,779	120,327	149,119	147,416	143,600	140,000	101,709	131,353
County Comptroller	105,337	99,938	80,615	71,351	99,800	-	-	87,873	101,709	92,375
Comptroller Deputy	87,239	81,395	112,677	90,196	105,622	-	-	-	79,991	92,853
County Clerk	99,665	106,023	79,092	67,952	78,654	107,650	132,037	78,000	101,709	94,531
Commissioner of Election	83,232	75,000	106,877	66,352	90,609	-	86,901	62,784	77,869	81,203
Sheriff	107,764	125,664	79,092	99,037	110,120	116,493	143,322	88,928	101,706	108,014
Undersheriff	100,885	104,015	111,595	69,592	119,409	125,671	128,100	76,694	94,023	103,332
Commissioner of Social Services	103,738	132,826	118,857	115,639	120,884	116,845	149,182	86,000	103,743	116,413
Commissioner of Health	156,363	167,772	159,268	81,661	173,021	147,963	157,349	-	153,015	149,552
Commissioner of Department of Public Works	85,786	122,500	118,857	105,356	-	125,382	131,800	103,426	94,748	98,651
Director of Personnel	89,706	101,725	105,206	94,703	105,616	110,976	127,900	92,000	91,053	102,098
Commissioner of Finance and/or Treasurer	76,702	110,188	98,625	127,532	116,682	129,180	132,721	81,027	112,214	109,430

**Titles may be different based on the County's framework.*

The data shows that of the categories surveyed, six of the Counties highest paid officials hold the position of Commissioner of Health, who earns on average, \$161,131. Oneida, Orange and Sullivan are the three Counties where their Commissioner of Finance (Oneida) and their Executive (Orange and Sullivan) earn the greatest salaries; \$127,532, \$182,177 and \$144,837 respectively.

2014 Top Salaries



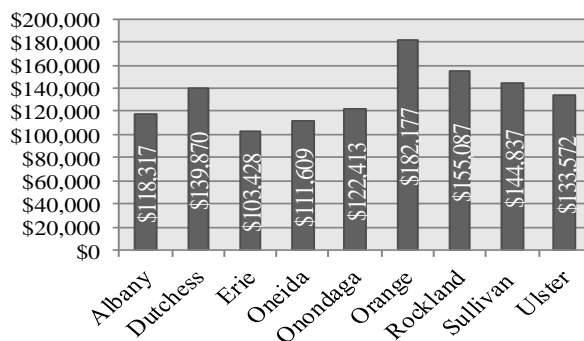
Albany, Dutchess, Erie, Onondaga, Rockland, and Ulster's highest paid officials, of those surveyed, are the Commissioners of Health. This is assumed to be attributable to these individuals being PhD's.

Comparison of Salaries to Specific Job Titles

County Executive

The following graph illustrates the salaries earned by the County Executive. Orange County's Executive earns \$182,177, which is \$78,749 more than the lowest (Erie). As mentioned, Erie County's elected officials' salaries are set by their charter, which has not been revised since 1996. The average Executive salary is \$134,590, Ulster County's Executive earns \$1,018 below the average but is the median salary for the counties surveyed.

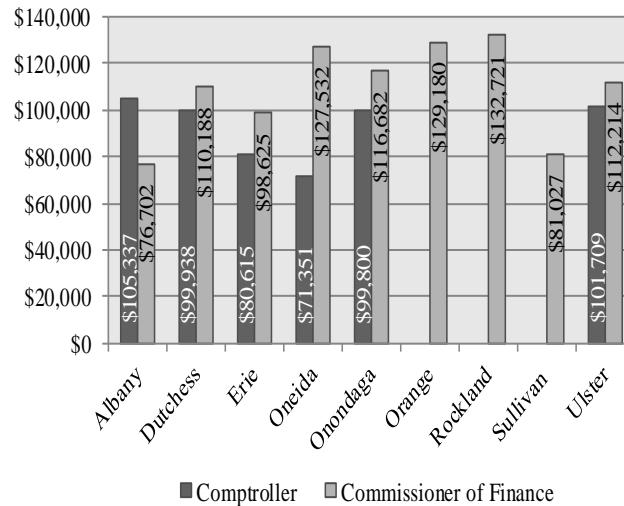
2014 Executive Salary



County Comptroller/Commissioner of Finance

Orange and Rockland County do not have a Comptroller. They have a Commissioner of Finance who is responsible for both operations. Sullivan County has a County Auditor who performs the audit and control function of government.

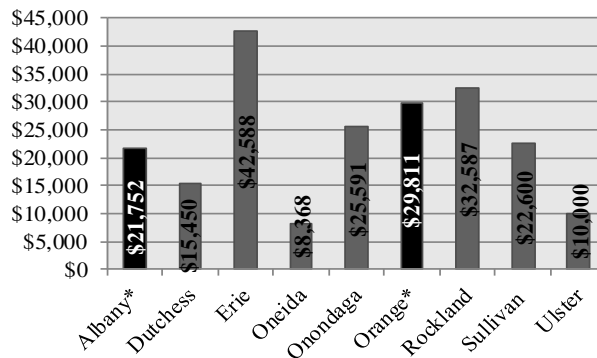
2014 Comptroller & Commissioner of Finance Salaries



County Legislators

The salaries for County Legislators are very inconsistent and fluctuate somewhat significantly regardless of the cost of living or demographics of the region. For instance, Erie County's legislators are both part-time and full time employees that earn \$42,588 regardless of their full or part-time status, while the salaries of our Ulster County Legislators, who are exclusively part-time, are \$10,000¹, which is also approximately \$13,000 below the average. It is important to mention that in Albany and Orange County, their legislators are considered full time, while in the other six counties, legislators serve in a part-time capacity. Even in comparison with these exclusively part-time legislative counties, the comparably paid Ulster and Oneida legislators are paid between approximately \$5,500 and \$32,600 less.

2014 Legislators Salaries



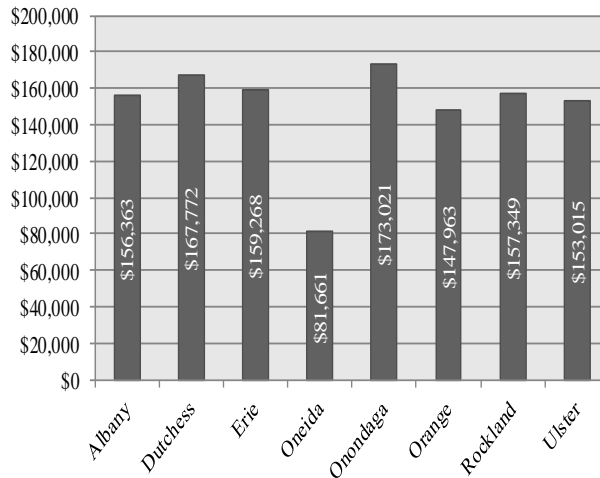
*Albany & Orange County Legislators are considered Full Time employees

¹ This data does not include those amounts paid to Majority and Minority Leader Legislators. In six of the 8 Counties surveyed, Majority and Minority leaders earn anywhere from about \$1,600 to \$8,200 more.

Commissioner of Health

The Commissioner of Health is one of the highest paid positions in the nine counties surveyed with the highest being Onondaga and the lowest Oneida. With the outlier removed, Ulster County falls to second lowest salary for this position at approximately \$6,000 under the average.

2014 Salaries of the Health Commissioners



General Overview

Table 3 illustrates all the positions surveyed and where Ulster County salaries are in relation to the other counties' responses. Only four Ulster positions earn a salary that is above the County average: Comptroller, Clerk, Commissioner of Health², and Commissioner of Finance. The remaining 16 positions are below the average salary including the Legislative Chair, County Attorney, and Deputy Comptroller. Lastly, the table demonstrates that in no position is Ulster County the highest paid.

It may be a hallmark of fiscal responsibility that Ulster is not the highest paid salary in any category. It may be equally noteworthy, however, from a standpoint of attracting and retaining a highly trained and motivated professional workforce, that Ulster is below the average salary in all but 4 of 20 positions surveyed.

² Ulster County is above average when Oneida County is inclusive in the data; however, it falls below with that deviation excluded from the calculation.

Table 3: Where Ulster County Salaries stand in relation to the other surveyed counties

Title*	<u>Ulster</u> <u>Salaries</u>	Average Salaries	Above/ (Below)	Lowest Salary	Above Lowest	Highest Salary	Above/ (Below)
County Executive	\$ 133,572	\$ 134,590	\$ (1,018)	\$ 103,428	\$ 30,144	\$ 182,177	\$ (48,605)
County Executive Deputy	112,214	116,644	(4,430)	93,720	18,494	146,047	(33,833)
County Legislators	10,000	23,194	(13,194)	8,368	1,632	42,588	(32,588)
Legislative Chair	19,500	36,861	(17,361)	19,500	-	52,588	(33,088)
Legislative Majority Leader	12,000	26,316	(14,316)	10,038	1,962	47,588	(35,588)
Legislative Minority Leader	12,000	25,202	(13,202)	10,038	1,962	47,588	(35,588)
County Legislative Counsel	50,000	77,236	(27,236)	40,000	10,000	115,000	(65,000)
Legislative Clerk	73,351	76,454	(3,103)	42,038	31,313	104,400	(31,049)
County Attorney	101,709	131,353	(29,644)	101,709	-	149,119	(47,410)
County Comptroller	101,709	92,375	9,334	71,351	30,358	105,337	(3,628)
Comptroller Deputy	79,991	92,853	(12,862)	79,991	-	112,677	(32,686)
County Clerk	101,709	94,531	7,178	67,952	33,757	132,037	(30,328)
Commissioner of Election	77,869	81,203	(3,334)	62,784	15,085	106,877	(29,008)
Sheriff	101,706	108,014	(6,308)	79,092	22,614	143,322	(41,616)
Undersheriff	94,023	103,332	(9,309)	69,592	24,431	128,100	(34,077)
Commissioner of Social Services	103,743	116,413	(12,670)	86,000	17,743	149,182	(45,439)
Commissioner of Health	153,015	149,552	3,464	81,661	71,354	173,021	(20,006)
Commissioner of Department of Public Works	94,748	110,982	(16,234)	85,786	8,962	131,800	(37,052)
Director of Personnel	91,053	102,098	(11,045)	89,706	1,347	127,900	(36,847)
Commissioner of Finance and/or Treasurer	112,214	109,430	2,784	76,702	35,512	132,721	(20,507)